

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



***Members of Belmont's Board of Selectmen at the fireplace in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.
Left to right: Will N. Brownsberger, Paul Solomon, Chairman, and Angelo R. Firenze, Vice-Chairman***

At the annual town election in April, Paul Solomon was re-elected to the Board and then re-elected as Chairman. Angelo Firenze was elected Vice-Chair. William Brownsberger remains a Selectman.

The world around us is rapidly changing. Technology has evolved more in the past few years than in the past hundred years. "Change" can take many forms – from the simplest improvement to the most complex. In 2005, the Town of Belmont continued to keep pace with an ever changing world, while trying to retain that "small town" feel. At times it seems Belmont is a victim of its own location, with its proximity to Boston. While this makes Belmont an attractive place to live, it also creates a unique challenge for town leaders.

Development in the town has accelerated as long-awaited projects finally get off the drawing board. The renovation of the Town Hall complex, including the Homer Building and School Administration Building, are shining stars in town. These historic jewels were saved and renovated for continued use by town offices. Right around the corner from the Town Hall complex, the reconstruction of Pleasant Street (Route 60) began in the spring with funding from the Commonwealth. Once complete, this project will ease travel by car, foot and bike. On the hill, the McLean campus began its first of three development projects, including 121 luxury townhouses. This spring, McLean Hospital officials also presented to the Board of Selectmen several deeds: one for 78 acres of open space, one for 1.34 acres for affordable housing, and a long awaited 9.9 acres of cemetery land. Residents have not been able to purchase a cemetery plot in Belmont for their loved ones since 1988. The prospect of a new town cemetery has been a source of comfort to many Belmont families. During 2005, the town's fire stations have undergone drastic change. The Waverley Street Fire Station was sold for development, and the construction of two new fire stations began. The strategic location of these stations will help ensure that all Belmont residents will receive prompt emergency service when needed. A new fire station has not been built in Belmont since the 1920's. In a nod to our seniors, residents voted to fund a new Senior Center which will be built on the site of the former Kendall School. Future development pressures continue in Belmont with possible projects at the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church site, as well as at the Belmont Uplands.

Town personnel saw a lot of new faces. Floyd Carman was voted as Treasurer, after residents rejected a proposal to change the position of treasurer from elected to appointed. Perhaps the biggest change was the hiring of a new Town Administrator after long-time Administrator Melvin Kleckner resigned to take the position of Town Administrator in Winchester, Massachusetts. Thomas Younger began serving the town as Town Administrator on April 11, 2005 after Rebecca Vose

temporarily filled in as Acting Assistant Town Administrator from December to April. Jeffrey Conti began as Assistant Town Administrator in the summer of 2005. The Municipal Light Department's long-time Manager, Timothy McCarthy, retired in June and was replaced by Ronald Lunt. The Town also hired Richard Simmons as the new Assessor. The position of Senior Planner was vacated by Timothy Higgins and the town hired Jay Szklut as the new Economic Development and Planning Manager. We commend all town employees who work hard to keep our town going!

Town committee activity continued at a steady pace as over 1,500 committee meetings convened among 75 committees in 2005. New town committees in 2005 were the Belmont Center Planning Group (temporary, appointed by Selectmen), Healthcare Insurance Committee (temporary, appointed by Selectmen), Highland Meadow Cemetery Project Building Committee (temporary, appointed by Town Moderator), Municipal Light Department Advisory Board (appointed by Selectmen), Security Committee (temporary, appointed by Selectmen) and the Wellington School Building Committee (temporary, appointed by Town Moderator).

As Belmont approaches its 150th anniversary in 2009, we look forward to a future of changes and challenges as we grapple with the issues of budget shortfalls, traffic, rising health care costs, balancing development with open space, being business-friendly, and keeping services to residents intact. The town was incorporated in response to a desire to create a vibrant, dynamic and independent community. Through our *Working Vision for Belmont's Future*, Belmont continues to strive towards successfully carrying out the charge established by our founders.

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